/575 cont./

261 almost no food value, they stuff their rumbling stomachs with them. Fortunately, snow storms (344) such that make any outside

> 344. A much greater impediment than snowstorms is the agitated sea when meter-high waves roll up from the south and churn up the water even in remote channels.

activity impossible seldom last more than three or four days, and that, after all, can be endured. In such periods of fasting the people quickly become emaciated, but as soon as they have enough food they recover almost as quickly, and then they can eat quite surprising quantities of meat." Sometimes the emergency can reach such a point that the people begin to chew pieces of leather. Darwin (d):245 ventured the false assertion [266] that "if in winter they are plagued with hunger, they would sooner kill and eat their old women than slaughter their dogs." The reliable Bridges (h):206 (345) and later Hyades (q):339

> 345. He specified: "There have been occasions of extreme hunger, when bad weather kept them from obtaining provisions from the forest, shore, or sea, during which they ate their leather shoes and thongs, but no one thought of proposing the eating of human flesh" /translated from Spanish/.

both very definitely disagreed with this. The Indians, however, [674] do steal from any European settled there if they are unable to obtain the most necessary food in any other way (346). When the

> 346. Bridges (e):333, for example, concedes this: "The natives killed some cattle and goats, and they steal crops from the fields; still, one is surprised at the limited extent of their thefts, if one considers the half-starved state in which they live."

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already said: "Gifts are most common, and it is considered a great affront to refuse a gift, which is also expected to be returned with something the giver wants" /cited in English/. Cf. Cooper:179.

is not customary among these Fuegians /982/ to wish for a particular present from someone. Such expressions would be rebuffed as bold presumptions. Anything a person needs he can and should obtain through barter. From all this we see that gift-giving, which, as such, is limited, has many unpleasant aspects.

5. Violation of the Right of Ownership

•674 Our Fuegians anxiously guard their right to the various belongings which they call their own. Violations are judged very severely and are avenged by giving the person a bad reputation. Not a single reliable observer will deny that now and then there is a case of theft among these Indians. Many exaggerated judgments, however, must be rejected as false and unfounded assertions (397). For example, Admiral B.J. Sulivan gives no justifica-

397. In Outes (g):53 we read the following obvious exaggeration: "The dogs, like their owners themselves, steal a good deal and, if not carefully watched, loot the stores of provisions" /translated from Spanish/.

tion for representing them as among the most thievish of human beings (MM:XV,131; 1881). Hyades (g):39 approaches the real facts of the matter in the following words: In the settlement of the Mission Scientifique in Orange Bay, "Where they were permitted entrance and free movement throughout the day, there were nevertheless not the slightest thefts. In this respect, therefore, the Fuegians are decidedly better than their reputation." Despard, on his journeys through the territory of the Yamana, was occasionally accompanied by Jemmy Button and his family.

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674 On Pictón Island and in Wulaia, Jemmy had to defend himself energetically against the thievish behavior of his countrymen. Nevertheless Despard (b):734 comments upon this: "As on our former visits, not the slightest contention marred our harmony; we found no thieving attempted on our property on shore, though some small articles were stolen by a visitor or visitors on board" /cited in English/. Bridges wavers in his judgment and once mentions that the Indians steal from each other when one pulls out the other's swedes where they are planted. Hence no one leaves his swedes in the ground until they are fully matured; "they are not half grown, but he cannot venture to leave them longer on account of the stealing" /cited in English/. The same missionary adds: "The natives respect our things much more than their own people's, and we oftentimes wonder that with so little power to repress or punish, we are so little troubled by the audacity, stealing, or vice of the people" /cited in English/ (MM:IX, 12;1875) (398).

398. On August 15, 1875, Bridges corroborates his opinion with the following observation: "As usual, gave a contribution of cooked rice in school-room, and am truly thankful that on no occasion have we missed any of the spoons and vessels used promiscuously by the natives. There are twenty-four canoes here at present; about 120 persons living in twelve different houses" /cited in English/ (MM:IX, 193; 1875).

In April, 1884, he writes: "They cannot cease stealing, and parties on the eve of departure come /983/ into the gardens by night, and fill their sacks and depart, committing lesser thefts meanwhile. The temptation is great, and as they can do so, and suffer little, they hesitate not" /cited in English/ (MM:XVIII, 185; 1884). A person who judges fairly must admit that theft occurs sporadically and is always branded as a crime (399).

399. In this respect Cooper:179 correctly says, "stealing is considered decidedly reprehensible" /cited in English/.

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●674 Without wishing to detract from the true uprightness of the Yamana, it must be pointed out that a number of circumstances make stealing difficult. The total possessions of every person consist of only a few pieces. He can therefore easily keep an eye on all that belongs to him and would immediately notice something missing. As soon as it is missed, the one person who could be the thief is easily identified, for there are no crowds in which the guilty one could disappear. Everyone notes very carefully who has come near his hut on this or that day. A further difficulty is hiding a stolen article and keeping it safely concealed. The owner would immediately recognize his own work, and he watches attentively for what he has lost. The filched article would invariably stand out among the few items that anyone owns. Stealing would be just as unprofitable among our Yamana as among the Selk'nam (Vol. I, 439). Even an insignificant article that has been stolen never makes the thief very happy (400); sooner or later he will get

400. In this connection Dabbene (b):198 says: "They know perfectly well that when they steal they commit a punishable act, for they hasten to hide the object taken" /translated from Spanish/.

rid of it again (401).

401. On April 26, 1871, Bridges (i):20 had a surprising experience. "This evening, Oosiahgoo came to the door saying he had a dreadful pain in his stomach. I let him in and immediately he began to retch most dreadfully. Before I could pass him to get a light he gave me my knife which he stole last Friday evening. He pretended to have vomited it up, which of course I would not credit. However when he came into the kitchen I saw that the violent retching had brought great abundance of tears to his eyes, which had run profusely down his cheeks" /cited in English/. Then Bridges remembered

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674 the circumstances under which the Indian mentioned had filched the little knife unnoticed and probably immediately swallowed it in order to remain undetected.

685 558 626 The high degree of sensitivity of the Yamana is sufficient to explain why they seriously punish a thief. Thievish actions by one of their people affects them very painfully and unpleasantly, even if they themselves are not harmed by it. The thief is generally despised, and even after many years of irreproachable conduct, he rarely succeeds in improving his reputation. Only in exceptional cases is the thief given a few blows by the injured owner (402).

402. Only Dabbene (b):198 mentions that "the thief is castigated when he is discovered" /translated from Spanish/.

In case of aggravating circumstances, a theft may even lead to a dispute involving several families. In general the Yamana avoid associating with a thief or they turn away from him with unmistakable /984/ aversion, so that, excluded from the society of his nearest fellow-tribesmen, he stands alone (403). This punishment

403. Darwin (d):243 evidently met such an ostracized individual in Goeree Road near Lennox Island. "The man evidently lived by himself and York Minster said he was a bad man who had probably stolen something."

of being ignored and ostracized is more effective than scoldings and whippings.

673 577 The extent to which the Yamana abhor a tendency to steal can be surmized from their urgent warnings to young people, as well as from their many expressions and linguistic subtleties in the designations for stealing. Koppers (d):189 took most of the expressions from BD. "There are words for thief, stealing, robbing. Furthermore for: to cause theft, to accuse of theft, to punish it. Also, however: to return stolen goods, to steal no

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673 577 more. Finally: to guard against being robbed, and, with this in mind, to entrust someone with the duty of watchman." The Indians are quite right in being concerned about their goods and chattels which, as such, are meager, for what they own is usually of vital necessity to them, and they could hardly relinquish them without seriously endangering themselves.

674 Since stealing does occur, however, in spite of being severely condemned, an explanation must be sought. One must never forget that the Yamana consider themselves to be at a disadvantage with Europeans and that they have been dispossessed by all those who have settled there as farmers or traders. They rob the Whites in order to get their rights and particularly to be repaid for losses. A person who is only trying to recover damages cannot be labeled a thief in the strict sense of the word (404). Moreover, the natives

404. Spears:67 makes the distinction that among the natives themselves "crimes against property were rare. As to the property of white men they were called thieves and robbers. Fitz-Roy is particularly severe on them in describing their lax notions about property" /cited in English/.

have been cheated in barter by many a European who did not know their principles and ideas of value. When this happened, they sought, by confiscating useful things, only what belonged to them according to their own ideas of justice. They saw an abundance of objects, whose value was unknown to them, in the possession of Europeans who visited them in the past century. According to their tribal custom, everyone shares his abundance with others; hence they thought they were justified in stretching out their hands toward the supposed abundance of the Whites.

Weddell's:152 supplies of iron were stolen twice, whereupon, by means of light punishment, he called the attention of the thief to his wrongdoing. A different attitude then developed among the natives and "they were ever after afraid even to lift a piece of iron without permission" /cited in English/. After that nothing was stolen from Weddell. He, as well as many another seafarer,

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674 expressly points out that the rich selection of the oddest things and the strangest implements fairly challenged these natives to reach out for them and /985/ entertain themselves with them, without actually intending to steal. They have pilfered all kinds of things just for amusement or in roguish high spirits.

How punctiliously our Yamana respect the property rights of Europeans is shown in recent times, since they have formed a clear opinion about their relations to the Whites. The belongings of the latter are just as safe in Tierra del Fuego as in other parts of the world, but anything that they leave lying around in the open is thoughtlessly abandoned to confiscation by the first person who comes along. No European in the Cape Horn region need fear major burglaries and premeditated banditry on the part of the Yamana. Although I lived with them for months, I never lost the most insignificant thing. On my third journey, as I was leaving Puerto Mejillones after the Kina celebration, I threw away a pair of worn-out stockings beside the wooden house of Santiago. I was already sitting in the canoe when Santiago came running and, waving them high in the air, called loudly: "Martin, you left your stockings here!" It was not until I told him, "I do not need them anymore, keep them for yourself!" that the faithful old man calmed down and went back into his house.

The relatively clear and definite regulation of property relations among the Yamana contributes very considerably to the orderly, peaceful existence of the tribal society. Each of them is very exact about the prevailing rules and customs, and violations of the rights of ownership and property of tribal members are actually rare.

F. Feuds and Blood Vengeance

156 578 Compared to the Selk'nam, the Yamana impress the superficial observer as peaceable people. We must also admit that protracted brawls do not occur as often among them as among the Selk'nam. All this, however, does not alter the scarcely surprising fact that our Yamana, too, are very excitable and easily offended out of an exaggerated feeling of honor. In many things pertaining to their person, things that we Europeans regard as utterly unimportant, they show a sensitiveness which is quite

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578 seriously and habitually. The same serious situation arises when a
152 woman leaves her husband, for she usually tries to steal away because of a love affair with another man.

627 The thirst for revenge is, of course, most deeply aroused by
674 an actual, premeditated murder, and nothing sets families against each other so violently as this act. For the Yamana every human life, even that of a child, is most precious and sacred (Bridges [h]:205); hence murder is an utterly abhorrent deed (408). There

408. In this connection compare our account of infanticide (p. 528) and abortion (pp. 491, 535).

are exceptions, however, Most murders come about through adultery.
[837] For example, if a married man is looking for a new tie and leaves his wife without cause, her relatives take her part, and they demand that the faithless husband give an account of himself or they simply take the law into their own hands and murder him. They say: "This woman joined herself to this man and they should live together to the end of their lives; since he failed in his duty, he must be punished!" Divorce without adequate cause is an offense against a generally recognized law. Each murder of this kind unleashes a serious /990/ danger for another human life because of the obligation for blood vengeance, and the danger is even greater in the case of a murder for an insignificant reason (409). In view

409. Bridges (VSA:XI, 260;1864) mentions: "If a man kills another causelessly, his relations are greatly displeased, since it brings each one of them into danger. This is a great preventive to blood-shedding" /cited in English/.

of the dangerous position one puts himself into by an act of murder, the individual holds himself in check, even on occasions of greatest excitement and the almost unconquerable passion for revenge.

674 It must be said that murder is rare among the Yamana, although we cannot give exact figures (Cooper:174). On June 20, 1884, Bridges (MM:XVIII, 224; 1884) attempted some statistics on murder:

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674 "Since our coming here in 1871, we enumerated with the natives twenty-two murders, or deaths from violence amongst the Yahgans" /cited in English/. Hyades (e):721 regards this figure as low: "it means an average of less than two violent deaths per year, and this in a country where each one redresses wrongs and exacts justice for himself" /translated from French/. He (q:375) believes that one reason for this low figure is a deeply rooted conviction of the Indians "in regarding human life as sacred" /translated from French/. Bridges later only very rarely mentioned a murder (410). All this,

> 410. Without further explanation he (MM:XVIII, 184; 1884) writes, for example: "Here [near Ushuaia] I found the native John Willis, who killed his wife some two years ago" /cited in English/.

however, does not make me change my own opinion that murder occurred at least twice as often as Bridges and Hyades say. I am relying on the dependable reports of the Lawrence brothers and aged Indians. We must keep in mind the irascible nature of our Yamana and the many occasions for this deed, as a result of which they had to take the law into their own hands.

266 It would be unthinkable to imagine that they would murder a person out of cannibalistic intentions. There is no convincing proof of anthropophagy; reliable informants emphatically deny this custom, and the Lawrence brothers never heard of it, to say nothing of never having observed it. Instances of it, beginning with the L'Hermite fleet (p. 51 /untranslated/) which is referred to for affirmation, have never been absolutely settled. Bridges (i):14 decidedly opposes this false accusation, since for all of them "is human life a very sacred thing and for this reason all the relations of the murdered person were in honour bound to avenge his death" [625] /cited in English/. The Yamana even detest animals that gnaw at human corpses, such as foxes, rats, and vultures. They do not even take water from brooks where there are many rats, and they give as their reason: "Animals that devour human flesh drink of this water!" If they see a dog come up to a corpse and start devouring it, or even try to dig out a body, they beat it on the spot, even

/994 cont./

627 that makes a stealthy act seem advisable to a person. This is a favorite procedure of the yékamuš. The following method has proved successful. A person who wishes to do away with his opponent inconspicuously will discuss his plan with two or three trusted friends. One day they invite the opponent in the most unobtrusive way possible to accompany them on a hunt for young or full-grown cormorants. The other may not and will not refuse the invitation because of the compulsory rules of social intercourse. Unsuspecting, he lets himself be tied to a rope at the top of the steep rock wall and slides down (p. 235). At the proper moment and without any kind of signal, his adversaries cut the rope at the top, and he plunges down and breaks his neck. These malefactors afterwards tell other people that the man, due to his own carelessness, was killed on the cormorant hunt. Spears: 68 mentions this stealthy procedure, as Outes (g):58 did earlier, and is right in calling it "a favorite way of killing an enemy" /cited in English/; this method, however, is rarely used.

278 825 674 The plant kingdom offers not a single efficacious poison, but the blubber of the grampus ĕpáĵačĭ (Orca magellanica), a pilot fish of the large cetaceans (p. 37 /untranslated/), is regarded as poisonous. I was assured, confidentially, that this blubber had been given now and then, its efficaciousness having been discovered long ago. Masemikens told me the following story which is widespread. Once in the west several people found a dead ĕpáĵačĭ lying on the beach. /995/ Its meat and fat were still fresh, so some of them ate some of it. Soon afterward these people died. Once Hawaten also came to this place. He was a crafty man. Before he ate, he wanted to find out whether this fat caused death. Unobtrusively he gave a man a small piece of it. The man immediately died. Thereupon he said to himself: "Good, that serves my purpose!" He took a large piece of fat from the ĕpáĵačĭ, cut it into small pieces, and filled a pouch made of the stomach of a šĕkuš (Chloĕphaga hybrida). Then he returned to the east. If he wanted to kill someone, he stealthily stuck a small piece of the fat from the ĕpáĵačĭ into the person's food. He did this several times and a number of men died. Hawaten was quite generally hated and avoided because of his malevolent disposition. -- Thus it was through him that the actual or alleged strength of this poison became known.